assistance to the people affected by such natural calamities. The Government of India supplements the efforts of the State Goverment by providing additional financial resources in accordance with the recommendations of Finance Commissions appointed from time to time.

Crop Insurance Scheme

470. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN.

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to discontinue the Crop Insurance Scheme; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTRUE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, it has been decided to discontinue the Experimental Crop Insurance Scheme (ECIS) implemented in the Rabi 1997-98 season in selected districts, as the scheme was found administratively infeasible and financially unviable. The original Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme (CCIS) will be reintroduced in those districts/States where ECIS was implemented.

Plant Gene Expression

471. SHRI JIBON ROY:
SHRI CO. POULOSE:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the observations made by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan that the terminator technology to control plant gene expressions is not suitable to Indian conditions;

(b) if so, the reasons pointed out by Dr. Swaminathan to justify his statement and

(c) whether Government will prohibit this technology coming to India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Dr. Swaminathan believes that farmers should enjoy certain basic rights as a cultivator and as a protector and conserver of the gene pool.

(c) Indian Council of Agricultural Research has seriously taken note of this issue as early as March, 1998. Further in May, 1998, a meeting on the issue was held which involved experts from Indian Council of Agricultural Research Department of Biotechnology and Delhi University. Notes were sent to Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (Ministry of Agriculture) so that necessary measures could be taken to meet the threat especially to ensure non-introduction of the terminator technology in India.

The patented technology may take some time before being put to use Nevertheless, Directorate of Plant Protection for Quarantine and Storage (Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. Government of India has issued the Office Memorandum No. 82-1/ •98-PPD dated 25.5.98 whereby the following steps were taken to stop the terminator technology from entering India:

(i) In no case any seed material having Terminator Gene should be imported.

(ii) Before issueing Import Permits for Seeds, Import Permit Issuing Authorities should satisfy themselves that such seeds are not having Terminator Gene.

(iii) Import Permit Issuing Authorities should request the importers to help in getting an additional declaration on the' official

Phytosanitary Certificate that the imported seeds (by name) are free from Terminator Gene.

(iv) Before release of imported seeds, Import Permit Issuing Authorities should satisfy themselves that such seeds do not contain Terminator Gene.

Production of Onions

472. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the production of onion in last three years with year-wise break-up; and

(b) the quantity of onion and onion products exported and imported during the last three years with year-wise break-up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The annual production of onion during last three years at All India level is given as under:—

	(lakh tonnes)
1995-96	40.80
1996-97	44.28
	36.80

*Advance estimates

(b) The quantity of onion exported in the last three years is as follows:—

	(lakh tonnes)
1995-96	4.35
1996-97	5.13
	4.48

As regards imports this item was under negative list. In October, 1998 import of onion was put under OGL. The NAFED has imported 687 tonnes in October and November, 1998 on behalf of Government of India.

Growth Rate of Food Grains

473. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the average food grains growth rate for the 1990's was 1.7% against 3.5% for the 1980's; and

(b) what steps are being taken/ proposed to be taken by Government to establish a substantial growth rate of food grains in the coming years, to meet the growing demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) the annual compound growth rate of foodgrains production in the decade of 1990s was 1.8 per cent as against 3.5 per cent in the decade of 1980s.

(b) In order to increase the production and productivity of various foodgrains in the country, the Government is implementing crop specific development programmes and schemes in which incentives are provided to farmers for use of quality seeds and location specific hybrid varieties, application of integrated pest management, propagation of scientific water management including micro irrigation, improved farm implements Besides, field demonstration on farmers holdings including training of farmers and farm labourers are organised for effective transfer of technology. Government is also providing price and market support to the farmers by announcing the Minimum Support Prices for major foodgrains crops and making arrangements for the procurement through the nodal agencies. The subsidised supply of fertilisers encourages its consumption for maintaining growth of foodgrains production. Further in the . National Agenda for gevernance, the